



BIZARRE BEYOND BELIEF

VOL.1 ISSUE#2







BizarreBeyondBelief: The first time I went out (painting)...

SOHOE: I was 14 and really naïve. I was pretty dumb and I'd just paint a whole alley with my friends. We'd paint every garage door and then we'd stand around admiring our work and hang out. I can't believe how lucky we

that we never got pinched doing that.

BBB: The most fucked-up thing I saw (painting) was...

SOHOE: There was a condom on a branch that had been carved into the shape of a dick. It had clearly been used, it was a little weird

wondering when the tree fucker was going to re-appear at the spot.

BBB: The funniest thing that ever happened to me (while painting) was...

SOHOE: Sock-rifice, some people just can't wait for toilet paper.





BBB: The scariest thing I've witnessed (while painting) was...

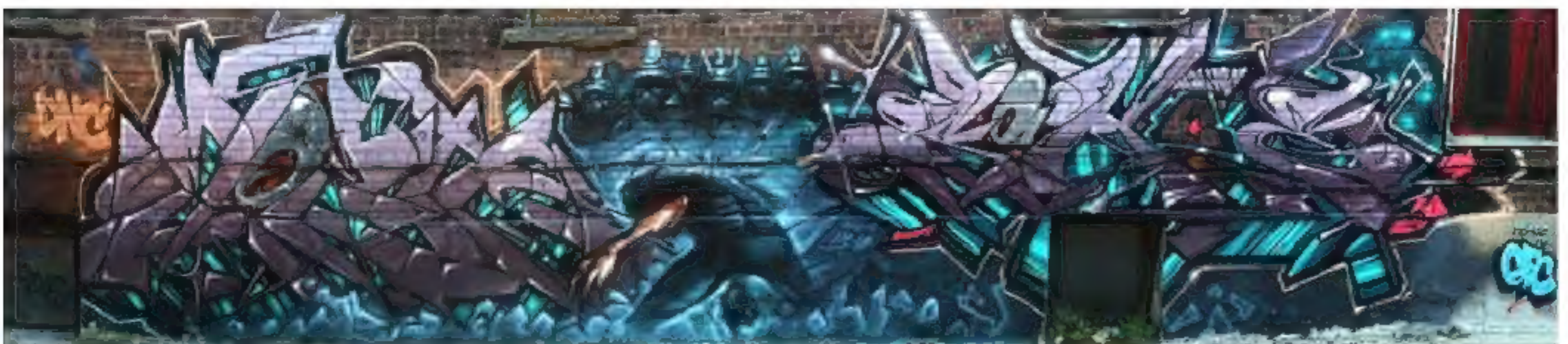
SOHOE: We found this homeless man's bunker, he had a bunch of baseball bats with nails sticking out of them.

BBB: The stupidest thing I've done (painting) was...

SOHOE: In high-school at a friend's party, I got a bit too sloppy and trashed my neighbour's van with tags. It was probably a dodge caravan or something, the next day it was pretty obvious who'd done it.

BBB: The strangest experience I had (while painting) was...

SOHOE: One time I was caught painting by these cops, because a neighbourhood hero had been following me at a distance taking photos of the tags I was catching, while on the phone with the police. So I was fully caught, then the strangest thing happened, they let me go.





BBB: The last thing i'll ever do while painting is...

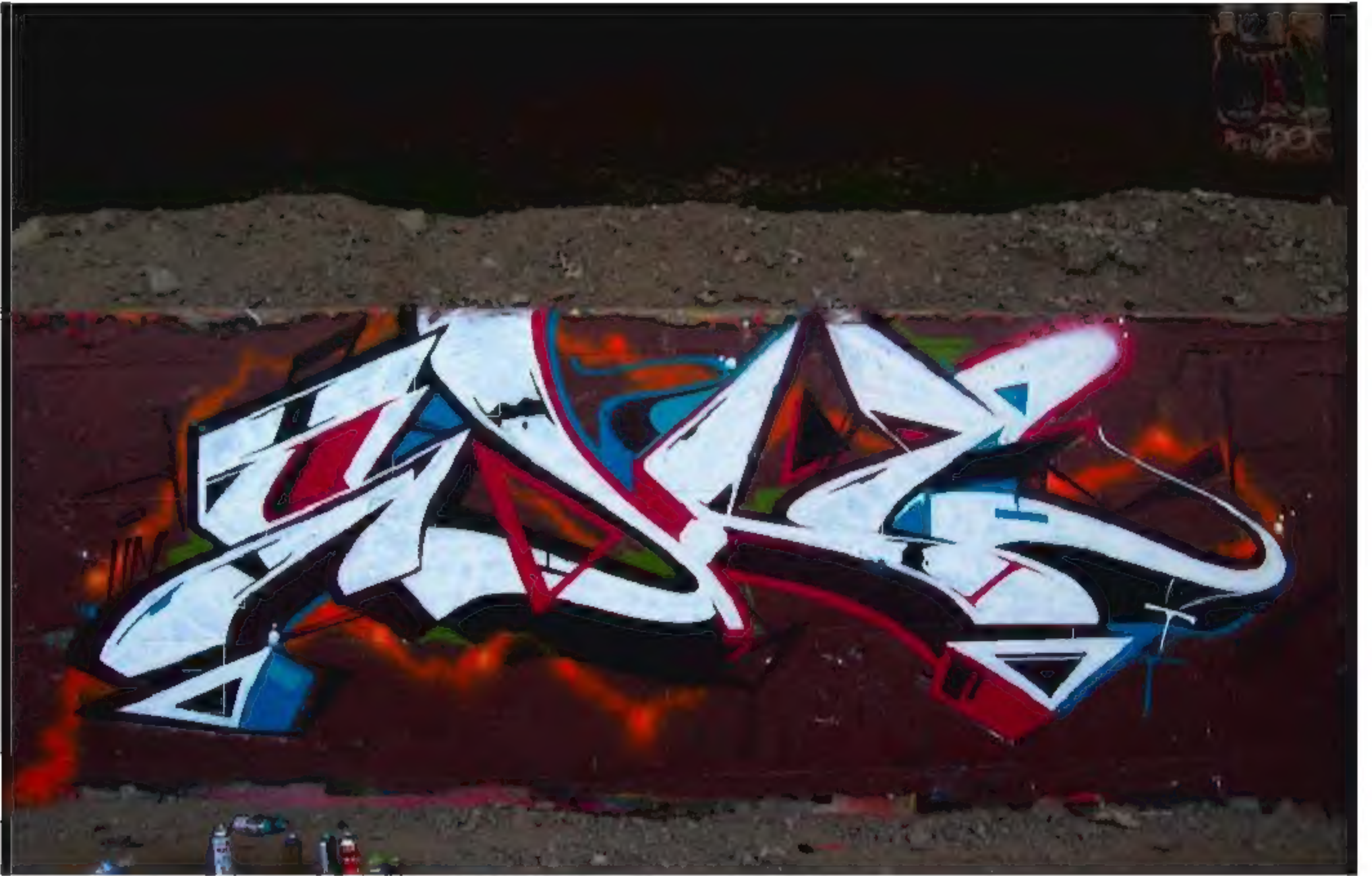
SOHOE: I know a ton of writers who don't mind rocking under supplied pieces, but I find it difficult at

this point. I'd rather do a piece that I am supplied for than two pieces that have no backgrounds or a lack luster amount of colour. I just did a piece that I liked all along, until I had no back-

ground colours. I used some old oranges and the whole thing turned out awful. In my eyes an under supplied or underplanned piece isn't really worth the sweat.

www.sohoely.tumblr.com









BizarreBeyondBelief: You have been a professional photographer for many years now, how do you feel that the community has change or has been affected since you began your career and what would you say is the most significant factor for these changes?

Adam Levett: At the beginning when you start out it you might just be alone or in a community with a few people from school and as time goes by you meet so many people and make new friends and start new relationships, so your community grows. I think the biggest change for me is just the fact that I actually feel like part of a community now.

BBB: Do you think the development in camera-technologies has help or hindered the photography community?

AL: I think for the most part all the developments have helped. Shooting with digital allows you to instantly proof things and to get a really precise idea of what you are doing. I feel like it made me a better photographer because you can learn so quickly. I started shooting with film and there was so much



waiting but there is an element of mystery in that, that I kind of miss. It also means that there is so much work to do post-digitally and I think its difficult for photographers to start out that way because digital cameras and computers and so expensive.

BBB: Now with programs

like Instagram, photography has become such a popular artistic medium for people. Where do you think photography will go and do you believe this is beneficial or detrimental to the photography community?

AL: I think its great that so many have inexpensive



methods to take and display their photos. I think you can develop ideas and learn things and maybe through this kind of accessibility, certain people will realize that it is something they're interested in and pursue it as a career.

BBB: As a photographer who works in so many different methods, from fashion to outdoors, which is your preferred shooting target and why?

AL: I really like shooting personal and nature stuff, there is something

really simple and timeless about it. It takes away all the other elements and becomes about you and whatever you want to take a picture of. It reminds me of how I started shooting when I was a kid. But being able to shoot fashion stuff is really fun and exciting, you get to meet and collaborate with so many different people. It's really inspiring, and while it's primarily a commercial endeavour there is always something nice and artistic about it.

BBB: And how does your approach as a photogra-

pher differentiate for each shoot?

AL: My job as a photographer is to give the client what they want so I always want to really listen to what it is they're going for and try my best to give it to them. As I said before it's so great to work with different people and learn new things all the time. Sometimes I go in with a really strong idea of what approach I want to take and it doesn't work, so you have to be able to change gears pretty quickly.

BBB: If you were to live in only one city, town, village or territory to shoot for the rest of your life, where would it be and why?

AL: My cliché answer is Paris or New York. I really like LA too. You have the ocean, the

means of documentation?

AL: I think photography can be art if it's done right. I like it as a medium because it can oscillate between the commercial world and the art world easily. You look at artists like Cindy Sherman or

creative process changes when working in video as opposed to photo?

AL: The process is much more complicated. There are so many elements to consider. More people and more equipment.



mountains and the desert. There is something truly magical about it. I was born and raised in Toronto, so I'm pretty fond of it in my own way.

BBB: Do you believe that photography is "art" in its truest form, or more of a

Juergen Teller and they both have worked in the commercial sense and the artistic sense and there doesn't seem to be any difference in either pursuit.

BBB: You have been experimenting with video work quite a bit now, how do you feel your approach to the

In video you can incorporate music and sound and all kinds of images pile on each other to create all kinds of meanings. Typically on video projects you are given a bit more freedom too. It's such a young thing is the fashion world I'm really excited to see how it changes and evolves.

BBB: Would you say it's possible to express yourself in greater detail through video or does photography also lend itself to same amount of expression?

AL: Film and video is always what I wanted to do and there is also something fluid about video that I am really drawn to. I like the fact movement, sound and music can create a meaning as well as the image. There is nothing like the feeling of finishing a video after all the footage and all the hours of editing it.

BBB: On a lot of these video projects, you work with your brother, would you say it's easier or more difficult creating with a family member as opposed to a firm or agency?

AL: Working with my brother Chris videos is the best. We can bounce ideas off of each other and take care of different aspects of the project. We both went to film school and have worked together ever since. It's so fun to be able to go to work everyday with someone so funny and inspiring, while also getting to make things.

BBB: That being said, do you like to work in a team atmosphere or do you prefer to work as a solo photographer?

AL: Being part of a team is great. Collaborating with people is what pushes me to to better work. The more people, the more ideas, and the better the work.

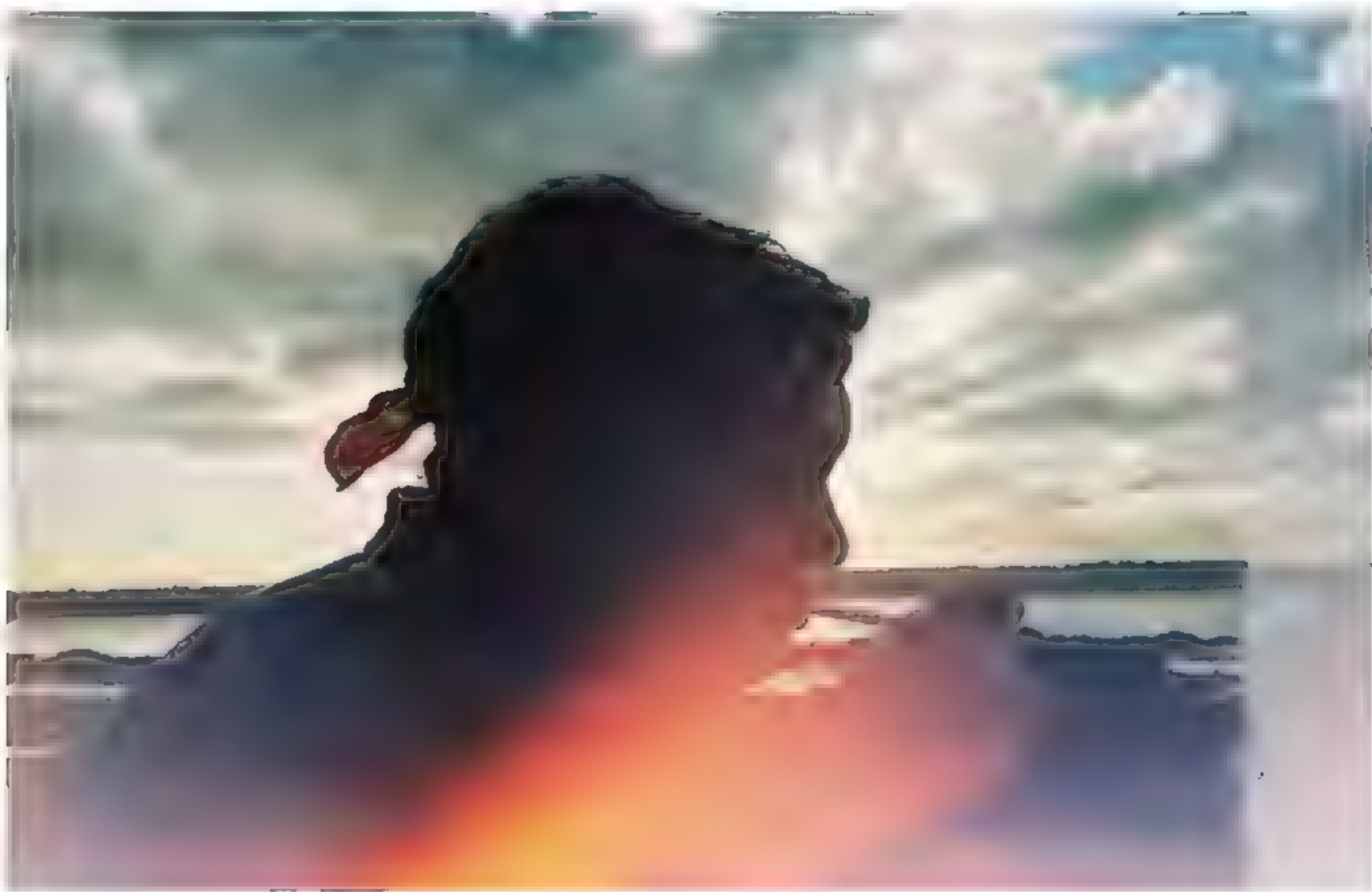
BBB: What can friends, family and fans expect from Adam Levett in the future?

Are there any special projects to look out for?

AL: Ummm, I don't know. Chris and I are eventually going to make a feature. As for the near future we are going to make some short comedies.

www.adamlevett.com







BizarreBeyondBelief:The first time I went out (painting)...

EKWAL: I was skateboarding at the time and me and my buddies stole a few cans from home hardware. I think back then I wrote Kats but I ended up changing my name another 50s time before settling. The first time I ever painted a piece I had no idea what I was doing. I did my outline first the filled it in like it was a paper sketch. I used to listen to a lot of gangster rap back then so most shit was always about weed and guns 'n' shit. Thanks god I grew out of that phase. I have to say when I started painting graffiti I had no idea about the culture and I just did whatever I felt like, so it

helped me develop an experimental style and now i don't have a problem breaking the rules of graffiti and trying new things.

BBB: The most fucked-up thing I saw (painting) was...

EKWAL: I have seen a few fucked-up things while painting, mostly drunk assholes. When going to, or leaving a bridge I always feel like I'm gonna find a dead body or some other weird shit. One time while leaving a spot I noticed some bones right next to the entrance of this spot and when I looked closer I noticed that all the bones were clean and looked to belong to some cat or dog and that the skins were also there and it was

clean and looked as if someone had skinned it. I have seen a lot of dead animals while painting but this was different, these looked strange because the skin and bones looked so clean, not like the animal died there. As we walked on we found more. Someone else even left a note in spray paint pointing to a bag full of skins saying, " what the fuck". When we left we found another bag of bones and skin. I'm convinced that some crazy fuck left it there as his pre-serial killer dumping ground. It was just to fucked up to think that someone skinned a bunch of cats and dogs then threw away the leftovers for someone to find.

BBB: The Funiest thing that

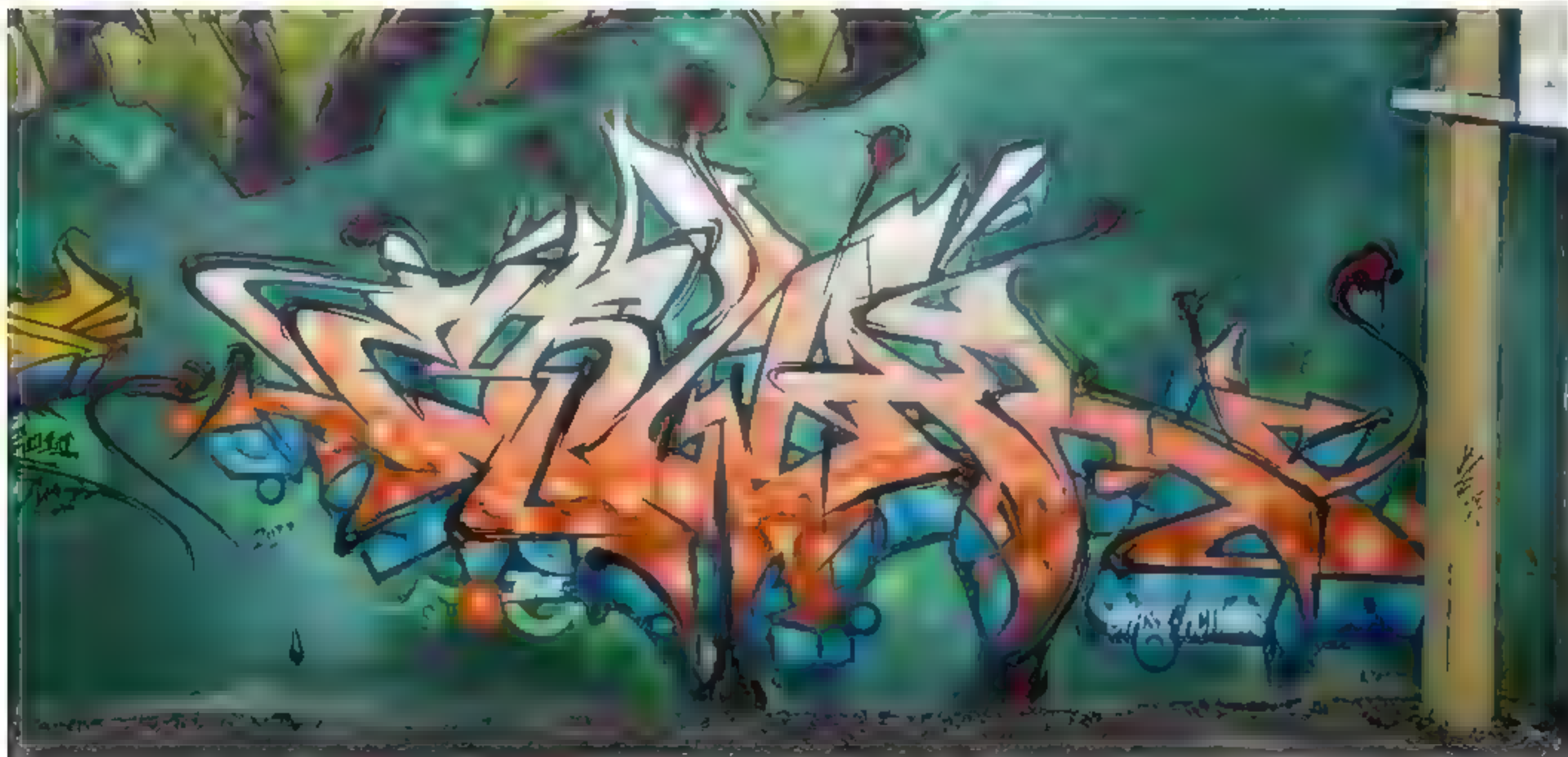


ever happened to me (while painting) was...

EKWAL: I was painting this legal wall, and I happened to be on a ladder spot. I was on the top of the ladder when I turned to talk to someone and saw a fat guy behind his fence mowing his lawn in a pink thong. We took turns laughing at the guy and then he noticed us and went inside his house. You never know what you're gonna see when you get on top of a ladder.

got hit and flew 20 feet and landed on a bunch of jagged rocks. It turned out later that everyone involved in the crash died. It was all because some guy was drunk and lost control. I think four people died, and now I don't like biking around that spot. A lot of crazy shit happened at that spot, some guy got beat down with chairs and threw paint all over the wall, people dropped hollows all over the inside and I got my paint robbed.

it at the spot some kid would probably write all over everyones shit. I decided to pop the can with a rock. Well, the rock I grab was probably too big and I was definitely too close. When I threw the rock at the can instead of popping a hole it exploded in my face. I was lucky because the can flew 30 feet in the opposite direction, but I did get covered head to toe in shit neon yellow paint.



BBB: The scariest thing I've witnessed (while painting) was...

EKWAL: It was at this old Canadian Tire spot that we had legal for the Junction Arts Festival. I was just finished painting and I saw a crazy car crash where a biker

BBB: The stupidest thing I've done (while painting) was...

One time I had this piece of shit can of neon yellow that didn't work for shit. I didn't want to take it home and I wasn't going to use it. If I left

BBB: The strangest experience I had (while painting) was...

EKWAL: I had a really strange experience painting in China. The graffiti scene in China is very different from Canada, and the public still does not understand it.



at this ghetto neighbourhood that was being torn down. Most of the time if a building is abandoned or going to be torn down it is okay to paint even if people can see you. The cops and security don't care sometimes they won't let you inside the building but the outside is always fine. This time we all split up to paint different walls. My buddy from Canada was around the corner from me so I couldn't see him. When I was almost finished he walked around the corner and said we should go. I asked him why, and he told me some guy was taking his picture and telling him he

was calling the police. My friend was not in China on a work visa so he couldn't get arrested or he'd be kicked out of the country. But our local friends weren't scared and wanted to fuck with the guy so they got in his face and took his picture. Then the guy left and came back with his buddies, and they were looking to fight. My buddy was worried cause he couldn't get in any shit, and I'm no fighter. One of our Chinese buddies was a kung fu freak, and the other guy had an extendo, so they weren't worried. They went to talk to the guy and his friends, and I seriously thought we were going to

have to fight them but then our friends walked back and said everything was okay. I thought the guy was pissed because we were painting up his old neighbourhood, but it turned out he thought that we were same people that painted some ghost and demon characters on another wall in the spot. Chinese people are very superstitious and he thought we were going to bring some bad "mojo" to his neighbourhood. In the end it was all good, but for a bit I thought we were fucked. You gotta watch out what you paint in China because you might get into some shit. Not the kind of place

you want to make political statements.

The last thing I'll ever do again (while painting) is...I will never stand on ice and

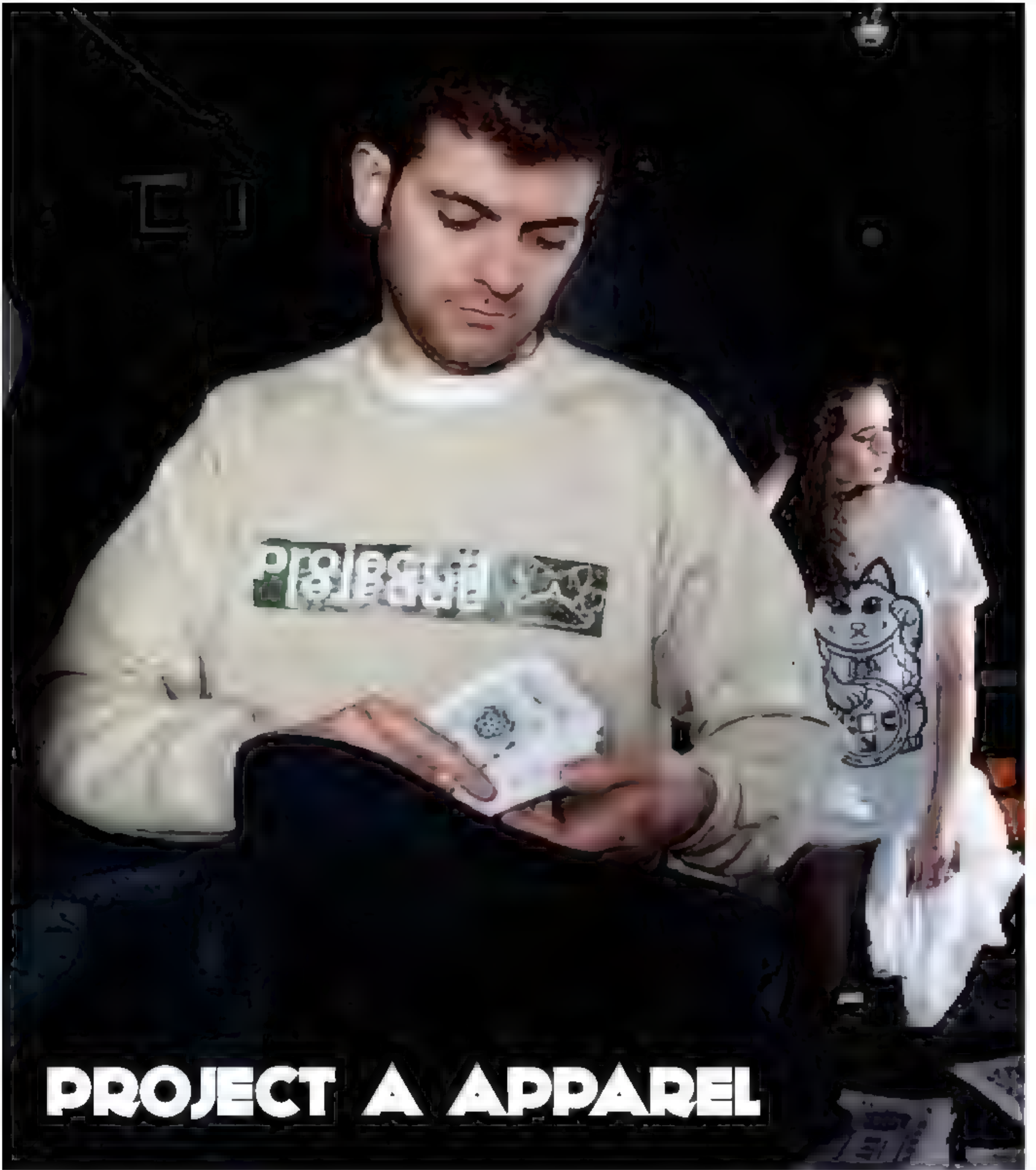
paint unless it is -10 C for at least a week. When I was a little toy I fell in a frozen river in the middle of winter. The only reason I was ok was that my friend lived really

close to where i fell in, and he helped me out. If it wasn't for him I would have been fucked.

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/39901760@N03/>







PROJECT A APPAREL



BizarreBeyondBelief: How and why did Project A Apparel form and what were the steps necessary in order to do so?

Project A Apparel is an Irish street-wear company based in Dublin, Ireland, set up by Dualta Jones and Francesca Griffin. After our first trip to New York where the street-

wear scene had a huge impact on us, we decided to start our own company. Our first line in 2005 was a small range of t-shirts designed for ourselves and friends. The reaction was good so we decided to expand and sell to the public.

BBB: What keeps Project A fresh and separates Proj-

ect A apart from the other Irish street-wear brands?

PAA: We started out being heavily influenced by graffiti and street art, and have since grown from that. We still keep traces of this and have a good working relationship with various graffiti/street artists for collaborations etc.



BBB: What's the inspiration or influence of the new Spring/Summer line?

PAA: Our spring/summer line was heavily influenced by my childhood growing up watching Jackie Chan films, including Police Story, Island on Fire, Drunken

Master and our namesake Project A.

BBB: What more can we expect from Project A? Is the Fall/Winter line already brewing?

We are looking to the future at the moment while doing

the rounds promoting the newest line. We are looking to grow as a company and move forward with new styles and different types of clothing. Something we started with our 5 panels and bags this season.

www.projectaapparel.com





Photography: Ciuin Tracey. Models: Shane Guerini, Kieran Ryan, Emma Kelly and Mary-Kate Lannigan



BizarreBeyondBelief: What we see in the mainstream is a very distinctive "rap" genre, do you think it's possible to maintain the true roots in hip-hop and achieve popular success?

1990: I think that most people who are trying to attain mainstream success don't care about maintaining "true roots" in hop hop, but, that being said I think it is possible, even for a new artist. A\$AP Rocky for example is attaining semi-mainstream success and is a NEW artist and has respect because he is true to himself. That's the key, being honest.

Saidah: Yeah. Most music lovers these days aren't really stuck to one genre, and the same goes for artists.

Beanez: I don't think it's possible anymore to remain true to hip-hop and get major success. I think it's possible to stay true and get to a certain level but you will hit a wall and never break through. I think Sean Price is the perfect example. He is hip-hop to the core but it's only the true heads that understand his value.

BBB: There's been a widespread notion that "Hip-hop" is dead, do you feel

that's an accurate statement and how do you feel about the current state of hip-hop?

1990: I don't agree. It evolved, just like every other music genre. I bet if a dope "boom-bap" group was marketed correctly they would have just as much chance at success as a "swag" rapper, ha ha. I don't even know what to call it. Nah though, (Hip-Hop's) not at all dead, (it's) re-born.

Saidah: Hip-Hop isn't dead, it's just changing, just as it always has been changing. Yes, Hip-Hop isn't what it used to be in the 90s, but same goes for other genres. Everything changes and evolves, it's not a bad thing, it's just different.

Beanez: I think it's alive and well. Hip-hop ain't dead it just lives in the clubs. People wanna party and the music is a reflection. Hip-hop now is just going through it's changes (but) it will always be around. Hip-hop is fine.

BBB: Because of this, would you say that we are at a point in music where it is extremely difficult to achieve infamy in the genre of hip-hop?

1990: I think to get truly noticed you have to be

doing something different, creative (and) unique because nearly everything has been done. Hip-hop "dying" has made it easier to be different and made it easier to achieve infamy in my opinion.

Saidah: No, I think it's almost easier. A lot more people are being discovered.

Beanez: I don't think you can be infamous in hip-hop anymore the internet has made it easy for anyone that's good to be a star. You're only as good as your last project.

BBB: Wra Beanz), you guys were a duo prior to ANL. By adding two more individuals to complete Ain't No Love as a group, how has the dynamic shifted and how is the creative process affected for each of you?

1990: HAH! The creative process has changed nearly 100%. We have a female soul singer to work with, which is amazing and our production levels skyrocketed. We also hooked up with a special engineer (Fresh Kils) who has hugely helped cultivate our new sound.

Saidah: Well because we're in different cities, not much

has really changed in the dynamic. We are still doing the long distance thing. Musically though, the backbone provided by Liam's beats has pushed us closer to the "Pop" side of things,

which has made us more aware of songwriting techniques.

Beanez: The creative process has change like crazy. In a good way. Adding more

people that you respect as an artist is always gonna enhance the work I think, and this new music gives us so much more freedom. I'm loving it.





BBB: Your group represents dually Montreal and Toronto, how would you say the reception of the group is in each city respectively?

1990: Last month we sold out our first show in Toronto at Wrongbar. Before that I was shook we'd only be accepted in Montreal until we did something big. Now though, I think each city represents equally. Until about four days ago two (of us) lived in Toronto and two in montreal (now 3 mon-treal). But yeah, very equal and hugely flattering.

Saida: Montreal (is) the city we debuted in. Huge support especially from the university crowd. Toronto (is) our home-town. We haven't had that many shows, but the ones we've done have had a great reception!

Beanez: (In) Montreal the reception is crazy. Everyone shows so much love (and) it's great to see. But in Toronto I think we still have to pave the way a little bit more (to) show the people a little bit more. I find there are more artists in Toronto and less fans. If you impress people there then you're

impressing your peers.

BBB: Would you say that there are more similarities or conflicting views of hip-hop within each city as well?

1990: Mmm yeah, not too different but there are. Some cities are more evolved and some are more stuck in the past,. Generally the bigger the city, the more open the public is to new sounds...

Beanez: I think the views are similar people want good music. Everything else is secondary.

BBB: The group's played a number of shows in different cities such as Austin and Hartford. How would you compare and contrast that Canadian vs. American scenes?

1990: Hartford was hugely accepting of anything we threw their way, they just wanted to party and hear cool music, not unlike a university town in Ontario or Quebec. We we're in Austin, Texas for SXSW which was really crazy. There were over 1500 artists. That scene is one of the most thriving in the world, not unlike Toronto or Montreal.

Saidah: I was surprised at how receptive American audiences were. It was great to see how open they were to our music. It was refreshing and very exciting.

Beanez: I think the scenes are the same like I said, it's the music that matters. People no matter where you are or where your from are going to love you or hate you based on the music.

BBB: Your videos convey a lot of energy and passion, do you feel that is truly accurate to the filming process or is it more a mandatory step in a performers publicity?

1990: I don't know, we're pretty energetic people and the songs are pretty high energy so it naturally conveyed that (way). However, our new videos are much less like that and much more cinematic.

Saidah: If you come to our live shows you'll understand that the energy you see in our videos comes naturally.

Beanez: The passion is real for me. What you see on camera is what you get in real life.

BBB: How would you say that energy and vibe contrasts from live performances?

1990: Absolutely, that's where we shine. Our live performances are where we truly excel as a group.

Saidah: Same goes!

Beanez: I have learned through past projects that I'm best when I bring my energy so the music hopefully reflects that. On stage I try and show people that this is me and this is the energy I have for the music.

BBB: If there's one major prize in the eye of ANL, like a certain venue, festival or performer/producer, what or who would it be and

why that in particular?

1990: Well, I want to get signed. Not for money (entirely) but more for the symbolism or "okay, this is our job now". It would make me feel a lot more comfortable. A major label would be alright, but an independent like Fool's Gold or Mad Decent would be even better I think.

Saidah: I think we'll all say different things. I'd love to be at The Grammys! Touring Europe and the USA would be another step.

Beanez: I wanna play the half-time show at the Superbowl. That has been my dream since I was young. Nuff said.

BBB: Finally, what keeps ANL ticking... What drives the group to keep on creating, inspiring and performing and what can be expected in the future both creatively and materially?

1990: I honestly think its just a bug that's in any body. Same thing goes for visual artists, entrepreneurs and athletes. We've found something we love so much we obsess over it and constantly change it and evolve and thats what makes it fun. Also, live

shows make it worth it every time. We're dropping a bunch of videos and campaigns before summer. Our next album will be very 80s inspired and a little slower at some points and a little more mature. Think Drive meets Ain't No Love.

Saidah: We all have our own individual drive to make music and when you combine that with the moving beats, the rest comes naturally. Our next project will be dropping Summer 2012!

Beanez: I think that we all just wanna make music. We took

four people that love to make music and put them in a group. Nothing matters more to me than the music (and) I just wanna make music and perform. That's what drives me. No one knows what the future will hold but I just hope it's good things.

www.aintnolove.com





BizarreBeyondBelief: The first time I went out (painting)...

FESTER: Was a very long time ago and a complete failure! I ended up with more paint on myself than on the wall I was trying to paint! I also

vaguely remember being completely fucked up from the paint fumes considering I hadn't really breathed in spray paint before, haha. I actually just had a random flashback. I remember thinking I was gonna faint from too much paint inhala-

tion, haha.

BBB: The last thing I'll ever do again (while painting) is...

FESTER: Definitely painting while under the influence!



BBB: The strangest experience I had (while painting) was...

FESTER: Possibly picking up paranormal activity in the night shots we took of our pieces.
The most fucked-up thing I saw (painting) was... what I thought was a stuffed animal in some pet carrying case thing on the side of the road

but actually turned out to be an abandoned dead dog. The poor thing was probably only there for a day or two. That was probably one of the most fucked up things that comes to mind.
The stupidest thing I've done (while painting) was... thinking it was a good idea to save taking crappy night shots and returning the next day to discover my shit had

already been buffed or gone over (I didn't learn my lesson the first time and this has happened to me on numerous occasions), haha. Last but not least, the all too famous mistake of putting "rusto" fats on non-rusto cans. Always a terrible idea, especially in the winter! Cold Fingaz @ hotmail dot com!

BBB: The scariest thing I've





**witnessed (while painting)
was...**

FESTER: Unfortunately coming across a half buried human head in a garbage bag on a slope behind a piece I was painting along the tracks. No joke! I was backing

up to check my piece out when I glanced down to discover what I believed to be human teeth. I then took a closer look and to my astonishment noticed something awfully similar to an nearly fully decayed human skull.

Well, in the end it sure was a human skull and apparently had ties to organized crime as well! I just wish I could find some money or jewelry or something worthwhile for a change! Too many bodies and dead shit!





BBB: The funniest thing that ever happened to me (while painting) was...

FESTER: Painting with my homie (Yaro1) at some layup on the side of a mountain back in 97 when a couple joggers came out of nowhere and scared the shit out of us. We decided it would be a better idea to

boogy up the rocky mountain face beside the freights we were painting instead of facing the potentially hostile joggers. Well, the end result was that when we were scurrying up the extremely dangerous mountainside we had already been noticed and we nearly caused a serious rock-slide. One gigantic boulder almost

took out one of the joggers down below and ended up plowing into the same freight I was painting! Haha! The joggers actually called out to us and warned us to come down from the mountainside and avoid getting spotted by law enforcement. That was it...Nothing more...Just a friendly heads up! Haha!

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/35915199@N06/>







STEPHEN HIAM

BizarreBeyondBelief:
What is your influence, passion and/or motivation that pushes you to wake up and create instead of going to a 9-5 job?

Stephen Hiam: I had a 9 to 5 job once in a supermarket and constantly sort of

with your graffiti background?

SH: I don't want history, I can only deal with what's happening now. That's really what it's all about. I have a problem with remembering things, seriously, and feel like a bit of a goldfish. I like to act in

that's cool, it's not really for them is it? I'm doing it because it's a safety valve. A secret way of expressing myself without getting arrested for violent and psychopathic actions.

BBB: What separates Berlin's art and graffiti community from that of



entertained myself by provoking the customers, until one day a customer came back to kill me with a baseball bat, a knife and a hammer. It was reported in the newspaper that I heroically defended myself with a tub of margarine and a tin of Heinz baked beans. Anyway after that experience I thought "Fuck it", it's just not worth the hassle.

BBB: How important is it for you to connect fine art

the moment, grab a feeling and express it. I'm not really painting... I'm breathing.

BBB: And how do you feel that this work is received from both graffiti writers and art critics alike?

SH: I have no idea as the works are relatively quite unexposed and private. Some have seen it and said "Fuck" and maybe that's enough. Some people hate it and don't quite get it, but

any other cities you have lived or traveled?

SH: I'm not really qualified to comment on that.

BBB: How would you compare and contrast street-art with advertising?

SH: I think they are both turning into the same bastard child.



BBB: How would you describe your art school experience?

SH: Terrible.

BBB: Do you feel it is important or is it merely a financial institution?

SH: I wish someone had have been there to guide me.

Instead they asked us to draw with twigs. Re-reading this it sounds quite interesting, maybe I should have listened more...?

BBB: You've worked in a lot of different creative fields in your time as an artist, what would you say differentiates fine/graffiti art to other fields

like commercials or special effects?

If you've got the guts, I would say the freedom to express yourself without limits, or constraints, regardless of the consequences or what other people might think. Originally I was seduced by the attitude of the London-based advertising



industry when the creativity was king. It was like give us a million bucks and we'll make what the fuck we like and you're gonna love it. Unfortunately, now mainstream advertising I feel is creativity by committee and this naturally dilutes the potency of the original idea.

BBB: What is the first thing

you think about when you approach a canvas?

SH: "Oh shit I'm going to fuck this up."

BBB: From there, what's your creative process and when do you tell yourself a piece is done?

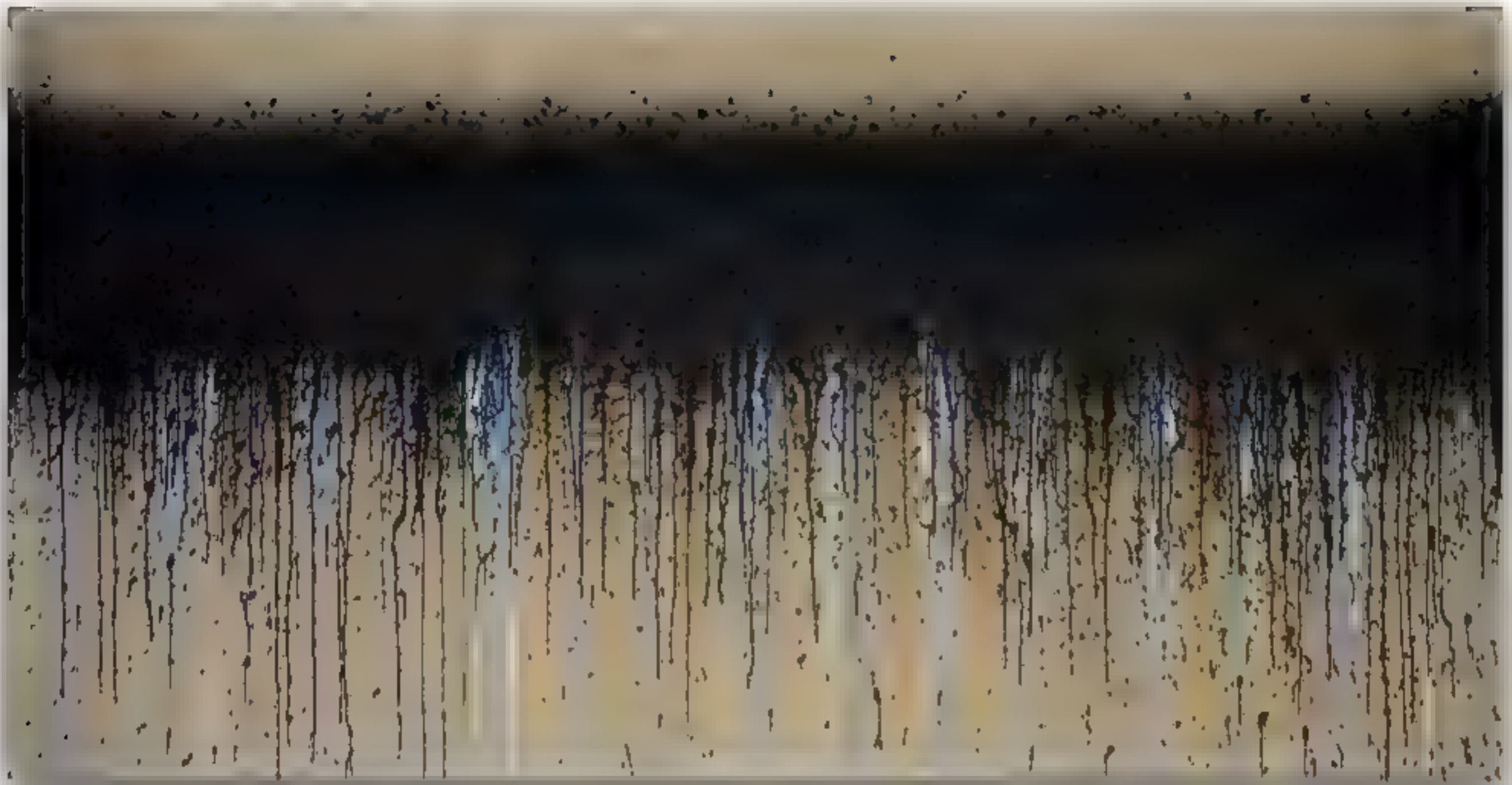
Meditating on the image and watching it progress. I'm

kind of painting chaos, so it's pretty hard to define when it's done. Maybe it's doing.

BBB: How would you describe your work to a blind person?

SH: I'm screaming hysterically down your ear, as satin skinned virgins lick the tears from your cheeks then someone slits your throat.





BBB: If you were to classify your artistic practice into a genre, what would it be and how did it get there?

SH: I can't really classify my own works into a genre, I don't think that's my place. But I do like the Japanese aesthetic about the beauty of imperfections and I respect this honest approach. I spent my working career busting pixels and creating "perfect" images for brands and

artists. Effectively making false images. Therefore I never wanted to combine my advertising skill set with the "Artistic" one, but finally found a way to combine photography, graphics, sculpture and animation in a series of paintings titled "The Fallen". I realized that if I had to say something, it had to be honest and brutal. Those oil paintings were painful to create both mentally and physically and when I looked at them

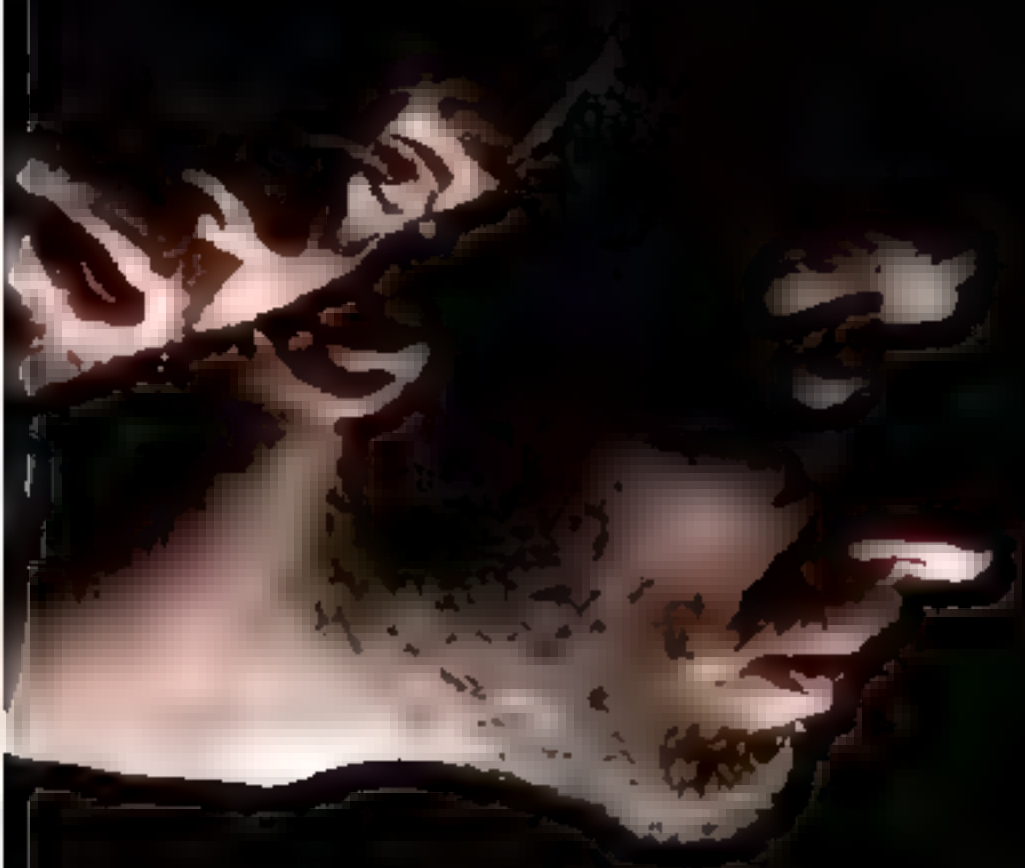
something was missing, a pure energy and a physical vibration, I suppose. In hindsight I was painting Death, now I'm chasing the physical vibration.

BBB: If there was only one thing you could take to the after-life with you, what would it be and why?

SH: A tin of Heinz baked beans.

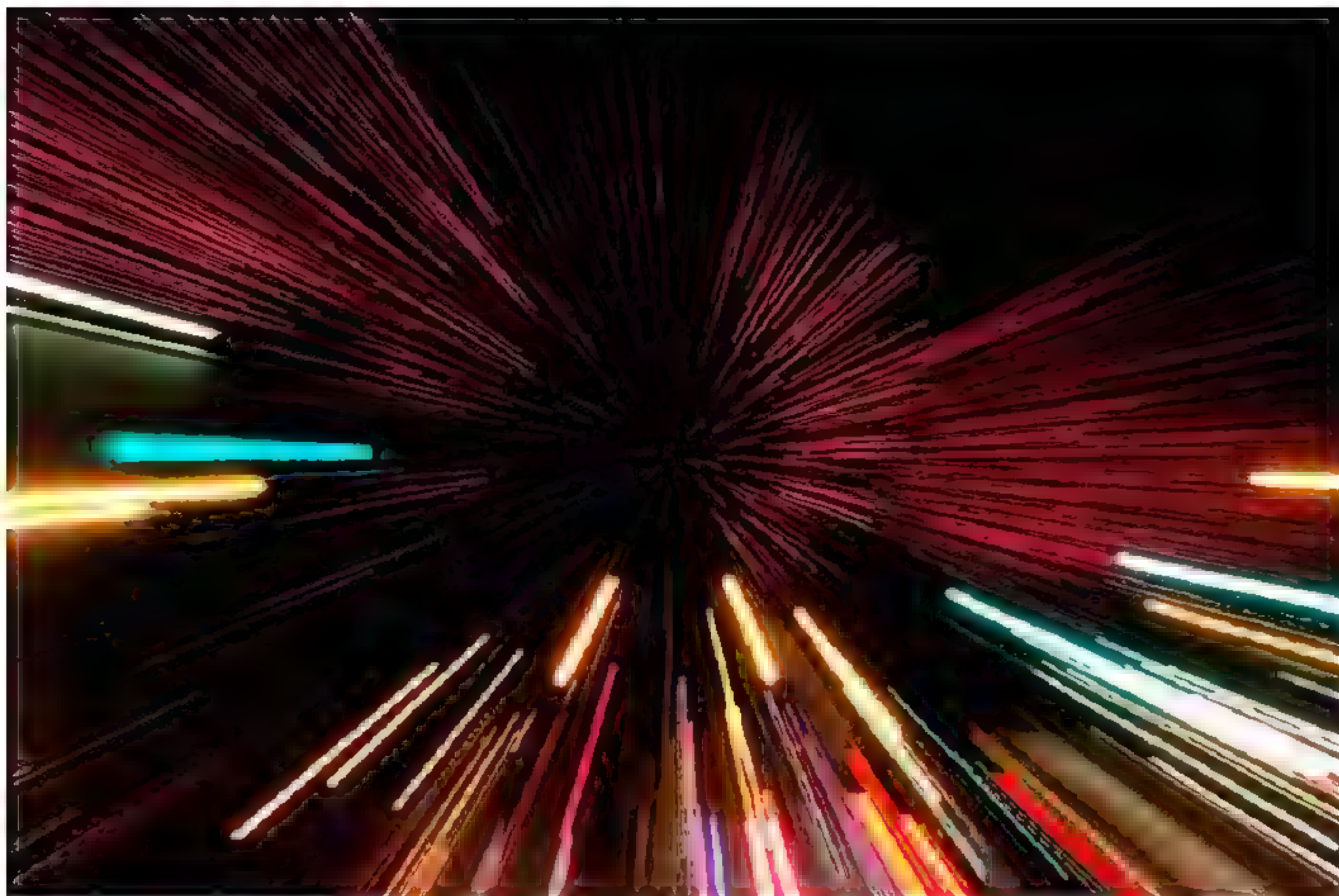
www.stephenhiam.com





ALEX CIRKA





BizarreBeyondBelief: As a photographer who's worked in so many different strands of the art-form (lifestyle, still-life, fashion), which would you say is the most challenging?

Alex Cirka: They all present their own challenges but that's the fun in being creative, thinking of ways to interact with subjects successfully and improvising on the fly. I shoot things that are visually interesting that I believe to have soul; trying to depict that character in my photographs and having an audience connect with it

is the biggest challenge across all groups.

BBB: That being said, which is your favourite and what makes it superior in your eyes as opposed to the other?

AC: Switching things up, having a variety of approaches, is what keeps me going. I like rotating through a range of genres, mediums and styles. I can't say that I have a favorite creative practice; they're all so different but have overlapping elements that enable me to bring a differ-

ent perspective and fresh take on each task.

BBB: As a painter as well, do you believe both photography and painting work symbiotically in your practice or is there a complete disconnect?

AC: I wouldn't call myself a painter, although I often have the desire to become a full-time artist. I would say in some of my work there are raw painterly elements that come from my past in graffiti that have shaped my aesthetic approach. There's an evolution and

development from when I was spraying paint onto walls into now the angles at which I capture light through a lens. Typography is a huge part of my career in graphic design, which evolved from writing my name on walls, playing around with the style of

was a platform or a foundation for your artistic practice?

AC: It's my creative roots; it started my interest in letters and style. It also started my interest in photography, documenting the pieces, people, places and things I'd

appreciate and understand more about it. It's being used as a cool-factor for most because it has an edgy appeal from the streets. Graffiti crew are developing into companies and brands, so it's great to see that something you live for can be something that helps you



letters. I try to integrate and understand my creative development, using each phase to step into a related field, helping my creative knowledge keep growing.

BBB: As an artist with a history in graffiti, is it possible to say that this

find in my pursuit of beautiful decay.

BBB: How do you feel graffiti is being portrayed in this new era of art?

AC: Graffiti is what it is. I'd like to think the general public is beginning to

live.

BBB: Being a Toronto-based artist and photographer, how important is the urban environment in your practice?

AC: I appreciate the character of urban



environments because of their density, diversity and history. At the same time I can appreciate suburban and natural environments since they have their own hidden gems.

BBB: You're a well-traveled individual, how would you say Toronto's artistic community fairs in comparison to other major cities like Berlin or NYC?

AC: Toronto has a huge amount of emerging talent helping build a cool scene here. NYC is so culturally rich, it has a deep history of

being an international melting pot for creativity. New York will continue to be the centre of cutting-edge contemporary culture, setting trends and new standards. The main thing I noticed about NYC is that it's extremely high paced and intense. There's so much competition there since it's a hub for creativity, everyone is trying to make it to the front of the pack and they'll step on anyone to get there. Toronto is quite different since it's not an international hot spot for creative talent to come to, although we have a lot of talent here,

there's not a lot of outlets to launch it from. Toronto has a lot of potential, I'd like to see it continue to grow and develop a stronger presence in being a cultural hot spot on an international level.

BBB: You have recently taken on work in leather, at The Leather Atelier. Where did this passion form and what sparked it?

AC: It's been a few years in the making with my business partner Noelle, taking an idea and turning it into a fully developed brand together has been incredible. I've always wanted to build things with my own hands that could be functional yet beautiful. She showed me the potential for that and we've created something unique that will continue to evolve.

BBB: On that note, what is it about leather that is so fascinating and what sets leather apart from your other endeavours?

AC: Working with tangible materials that come from nature, especially vegetable tanned leather, has a certain unique rich tactility. The tools, materials, techniques, treatments and process separate the experience for me. Creating the product, documenting the process



and seeing others interpret it through their sense of style makes it full circle.

BBB: Does the dynamic of owning a leather company demand much more from you than as an artist or photographer considering it's more entrepreneurial?

AC: Starting and running a creative business making products, having to wear multiple hats at once, is very demanding. Leatherwork is a detailed process; our pieces require a high level of care and precision to make, which demands a lot of time

to do it correctly. Having to source materials, come up with designs, make patterns, alter prototypes, refine elements, cut, dye, etc... to produce a wide range of pieces is a challenging and skilled process. On top of that, there's also creating, developing and maintaining the brand's image; doing lookbooks, product shots, updating social media and designing promo materials. That's not all of it either; the most important thing to keep on top of is managing sales business relationships to make it viable. When I work as a photographer, it's

my main role to compose the final part of the process, most of the time. Since I'd have a stylist, model, set designer, hair and make up artist to collaborate with it on a shoot, it makes things less demanding on me. That being said, a lot of work has to go into staying on top of business and being organized in order to make it a profession, not a hobby.

BBB: If you could only grab three things with you on a trip, would what they be? Why? And where would you go?

AC:

1) Camera, can't go
anywhere without it.

2) Sketchbook, always
coming up with new
ideas and doodling.

3) Mp3 player, trips
always need a soundtrack
to vibe with.



BBB: What's can fans, consumers and creatives alike expect from Alex Cirka and The Leather Atelier?

AC: I'm always working on new creative ideas/projects in photography and design that strive to bring something unique, original and

authentic to the table. The same can be said for The Leather Atelier, we're always working on new pieces and projects. There's a bunch of things in the works that will be ready in the coming months. Stay posted by following us on Twitter: http://twitter.com/leather_atelier

Tumblr:
<http://theleatheratelier.tumblr.com/>
and Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Leather-Atelier/213813995312820>
to keep up to date on the process.

www.alexcirka.com







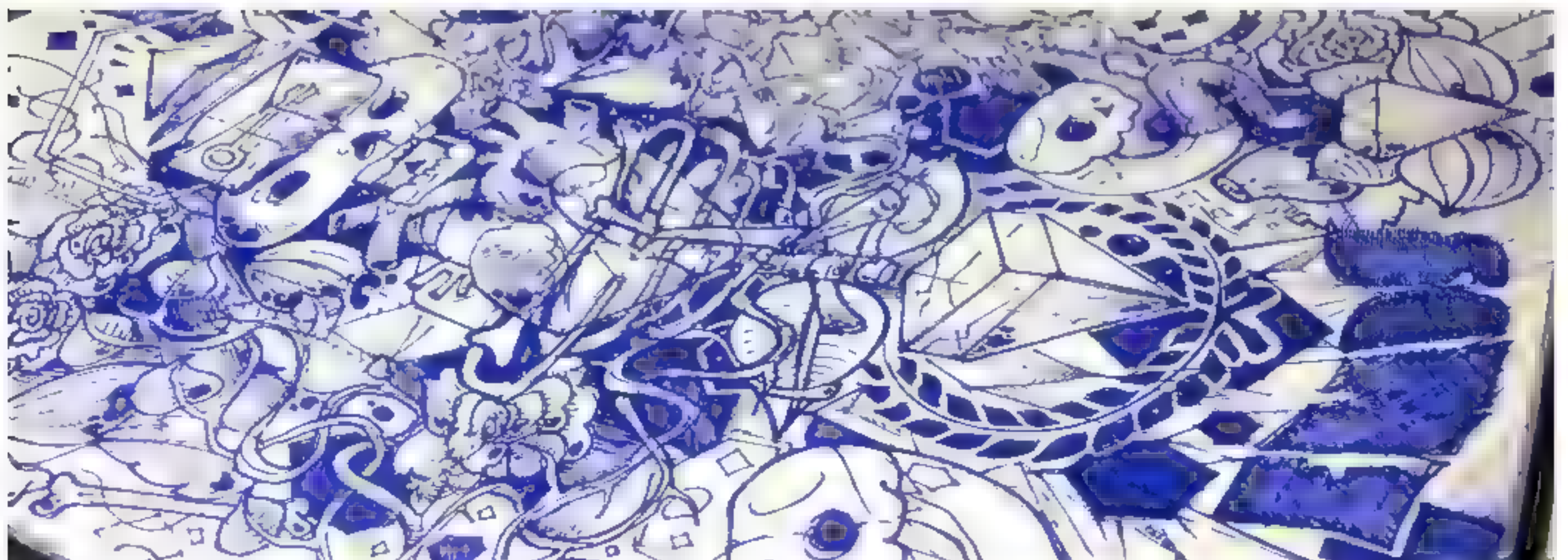


BizarreBeyondBelief: The first time I went out (painting)...

GOMER: I was seventeen and I had to sneak out from my parents place without waking them up. In order to accomplish that, I had to jump in our garden and cross the neighbours garden to reach the

street. And our lovely neighbours had (at that time) a huge and scary doberman. The first time it took me fifteen minutes to cross a ten meter long garden. I was so scared of confronting the dog in the pitch black, I was stopping at every step to listen if the dog was close. I actually never faced him at night because he

was probably sleeping inside. It always scared me to death to cross that garden, but the urge of going out was stronger. So the streets were actually the easy part for me at that time, the scariest thing in bombing was the dog and because I had to cross the same garden on my way back also.



BBB: The most fucked-up thing I saw (painting) was...

GOMER: Cops beating the

BBB: The funniest thing that ever happened to me (while painting) was...

GOMER: Trying to leave a train

to hide his dick, pants on his feet and my mate laughing to death while trying to grab all his cans in the grass. Hilarious.



shit out of one of my handcuffed friend's, asking him where I was and breaking two of his ribs, while i was hiding ten meters away in some bushes across train tracks. Once the (cops) understood he wouldn't say shit, they hid in the same bushes as I was already, waiting for me to come back. I stayed for eight hours in those bushes without moving a muscle. They left when the sun rose.

yard in Milan through a park, without disturbing a couple having sex in the grass close to where we were supposed to land from jumping the fenced-wall outside of the yard. Then I saw my friend slipping off the wall, falling with all cans also falling in every different direction. Then the couple realized they were not alone, but out of nowhere here it is 7 strong, masked guys, with sticks and batons in their hands and this guy trying

BBB: The scariest thing I've witnessed (while painting) was...

GOMER: One of my friend's disappearing in front of me, while walking at night on train tracks. He fell in a 2-meter-deep hole and instantly disappeared from my sight while I was looking elsewhere for a second I was really scared because in just one second he disappeared and we were in the middle of nowhere, just grass everywhere.



it took me a minute to see the hole. He was silent as he was a bit shocked and dizzy...but safe...and we had already finished painting, so it was all fine.

BBB: The stupidest thing I've done (while painting) was...

GOMER: Trusting the person next to me.

BBB: The strangest experience I had (while painting) was...

GOMER: A night owl doing the look out for me and my friends while painting a train. I always tell



this story. The owl would always stop "singing" ten seconds before a car would cross the tracks close to where we were painting...so we always would duck and hide when

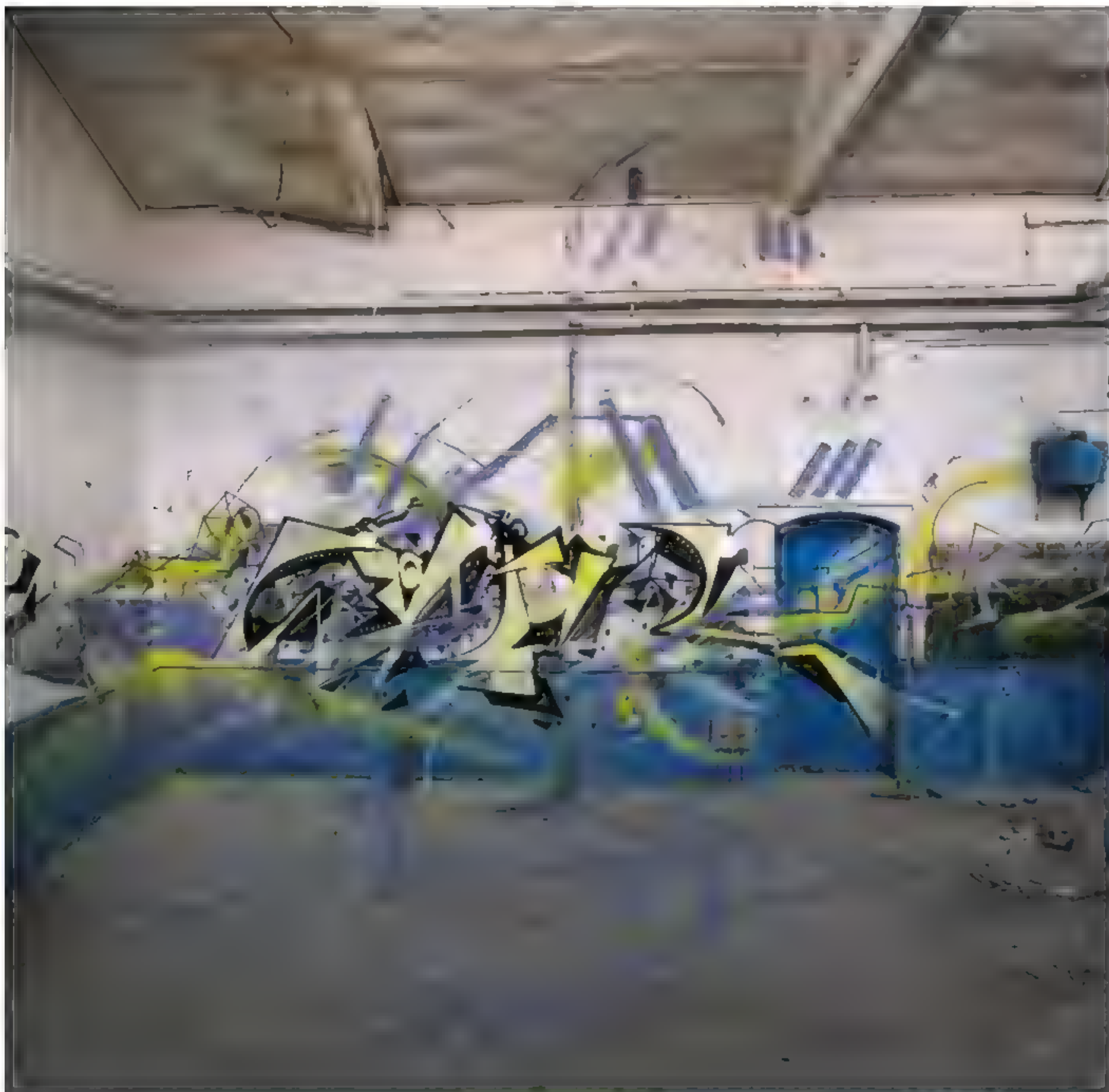
the "music" stopped and waited for the car (to pass) and then would resume painting.
Magic.

BBB: The last thing I'll

ever do again (while painting)...

GOMER: Is not having a shit before going out...hahaha. You never know when will be your next chance to take a proper dump...haha.

<http://rorschachdiary.tumblr.com>











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COVER PHOTOGRAPH: DHOS